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ABSTRACT

Instructional Management must be carried out so that it is responsive in an accountability sense to the social system; there must be negotiation and communication among a variety of parties; and the work must be understood, accepted, and supported by all key participants. Communication is needed to establish and maintain the system, to resolve problems and improve negotiations, and to provide information to everyone interested in the instruction process. The author discusses some of the research by the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development into the relationships between personal variables and administrative styles. He also describes a simulation that attempted to learn how the differences in the effectiveness of the performance of elementary principals might be described. (JF)

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TOPIC:
STRENGTHENING ADMINISTRATORS' MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES.

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Two Zen monks were on a pilgrimage. In the course of their travels they came to a stream that was wide and deep. While they stood hesitating, one of them observed an attractive girl downstream in the same predicament. Immediately he made his way to her side, boldly lifted her into his arms, forded the stream, and put her down on the other side. When his companion joined him they resumed their journey. After walking half an hour in silence, the second monk turned to the first and suddenly blurted out: "Brother, it was wrong of you to take that young woman into your arms and cross the stream with her. You know that we monks are forbidden to touch a woman." Replied the first monk: "I put her down on the other side of the stream; you're still carrying her."

Many of us still carry with us ideas and perceptions that don't square perfectly with today's educational realities. In that sense we're a little like the troubled monk I've just mentioned.

But there's one educational reality that you as administrators, and I, representing a non-profit R ' D agency, both share and both carry with us today. There simply isn't enough funding to do our jobs the way we'd like to do them. Your fiscal problems get ample attention in the press so both you and I are only too keenly aware of them. The problem of funds for R&D has been well-stated by Jerrold Zacharias. The railroad industry and the school industry each run at about one hundred billion dollars per year; each has spent less than two-tenths of one per cent on reform. According to Dr. Zacharias, the public is simply not yet willing to think in terms of five per cent —five billion dollars a year — for the processes of improving education or the railroads.

So much for money — at least for the moment.

"To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose...A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together." Since today is Sunday, I trust that you'll forgive me for opening on this note.

But I do think that some of my remarks today will have the appearance of casting stones-- if not at you personally, at least at the systems you are employed in. I suspect I will seem critical of school administration in general and a goodly number of those who are professionally engaged in it. You might easily decide that I have little or no appreciation of the many accomplishments of our public schools or of the dedication and skills of those who operate them. You might also decide that I don't understand the complexity and difficulties of school administration.

So let me say first that the American school system is one of the best in the world. Some are better than ours in one or another way. But, on balance, ours is mighty good. We could spend our time together congratulating ourselves for the many excellences that we jointly recognize. Or we could look at some of the vigorous criticisms that are rightly or wrongly leveled at our schools.

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You who administer schools stand under a constant barrage of criticism. In the San Francisco news media I have yet to find a positive feature story about school administration. The newspapers instead seem to delight in almost daily accounts of administrative shortcomings. I hope that the major media in your cities show better balance. The stories that we get in the Bay Area, taken at face value, invariably blame administrative failures for the troubles that are all too visible in California schools.

Lets take a closer look at the problems.

School responsibilities are expanding very rapidly. Today they include concerns that, in the past, were dealt with by the home or other social institutions. You know them all -- transporting pupils to and from school, serving lunch and sometimes breakfast, worrying about moral development, offering sex education, trying to prevent drug abuse, providing vocational guidance, and so on. It's true that the general public strongly supports many of these areas as proper educational concerns, but many parents, many educators, and many taxpayers don't rate them as the prime focus of education. Yet there was a time when we all agreed that education's prime task was simply providing pupils with opportunities to learn to read, to write, and to figure.

School responsibilities are widening in other ways, too. You're asked to work with greater numbers and greater varieties of clients, with a wider range in levels of achievement expected. You're asked to correct social injustices, like equalization of economic opportunities and racial integration. The tasks set for our schools have grown beyond the resources taxpayers are willing to provide.

Thus the situation you face as an administrator is one in which the chances for failure easily outrank the chances for success. You can view that as a personal challenge. Or you can simply use it as a satisfactory excuse to explain any failures that may be occurring.

You know better than I that your siuation is moving through rapid and dramatic change. You know, too, that in such a crucible the competency of each role-player will be measured.

Rapid changes have thrown the role of school administrator into a state of buzing confusion. But there are some fairly clear trends, from which a new and clearer role is likely to emerge.

Let's look at a handful of those trends and then try to mesh them with some new competencies that will be needed if you are to be able to meet the challenges and opportunities looming on the horizon.

The most obvious trend comes from the decline of in loco parentis. When you and I went to school, teachers and administrators were looked up to as authority figures who could suggest, command, or otherwise act in ways very similar to the ways our parents acted at home. Now that situation has changed radically in many schools, perhaps in most. Children mature earlier and move toward adult roles earlier. Perhaps this development can be viewed as a positive sign, but it has clearly made our high schools and junior highs noisier, dirtier, and less orderly than when we were teenagers.

Another trend centers around the concept of accountability. You don't need more words from me on this topic. The needs and problems have been well argued in your journals and in popular media as well. But isn't it amazing how little school practices have changed now that accountability has been talked about so fully for so long? Resources have been used to move toward accountability, but where are the measured results?

The Stull Act in California is only one example. Our state legislature has tried to introduce accountability into the operations of schools that enroll 10 percent of the nation's children. Obviously legislation can spur some action, but it cannot provide California administrators with the competencies they will need to carry out programs that will work under this mandate. These competencies will have to be learned by the administrators themselves.

Accountability is a very tricky area; it's loaded with lots of technical problems, like finding dependable measures of pupil achievement. Or like figuring out how to fit responsibility for achievement (or lack of it) with individual performance. Then there are those sticky political questions that boil up from organized teacher groups. So when you try to apply accountability to ongoing instructional programs in your schools, you face what is probably the most troublesome problem in education today. And it's still unresolved.

The school administrator's role is caught up in another area of change: That of community or public involvement. Your business is one of operating schools, and now community groups, parents, taxpayers, governmental interests, and even students, want to help you run your business. Fine and dandy, if all those groups had similar interests. But they don't, as you know all to well. So your role becomes one of mediating conflicting demands. After long debates and often longer delays, you must make decisions that are, at best, compromises.

In such a situation, how can you lead or show initiative? How much of your energy is sapped by trying to resolve such conflicts? How much time can you give to moving your schools ahead toward richer fulfillment and greater achievement if you must devote your time to simply maintaining the present organization?

Another major trend--one I'm sure you "enjoy" equally as much--is the movement toward collective action by members of your teaching staff. Teacher associations and unions have gained tremendous power in school operations. They began with demands for improved economic and working conditions: now they are extending their interests rapidly into management of the instructional process itself at all levels. Do you see this move as loftier professionalism on the part of teachers, or as a way of increasing their power in relation to you as administrators? I certainly can't predict the outcome of this new struggle, but it seems obvious to me that any administrator working with this set of problems will need competencies that most of your colleagues have rarely needed in the past.

We should mention one more trend that's been going on longer than the others, but that has recently begun to move more briskly. Here I'm referring to the way laws and regulations are being passed to codify for procedures under which schools must be operated. When you were trained for your present position, you had to put in a goodly amount of time learning about school law. But the problem isn't just to be sure you comply with detailed and specific federal, state, and local statutes. It's also that there are lots of them, they're complex, and some of them even contain conflicting provisions or regulations. Why are there more today? Simply because the federal government and the courts have become more concerned about public education. As a result, many of you now must operate programs that were invented and mandated somewhere else instead of scouting for options on your own initiative.

In these remarks I've referred several times to new competencies that administrators may need if they're to be able to perform well in the emerging roles that I foresee coming into being. I don't want to analyze or classify these competencies today. Rather I'd like to generalize about, and then make more concrete, a key deficiency. After that I'll take a little time to explain in some detail an opportunity for developing specific competencies that comes from the work of some of my colleagues at the Far West Laboratory.

Most administrators use three important concepts as if they were synonyms. These are: administration, management, and leadership. But I think there are sharp distinctions among these three concepts which must be maintained. If we can separate them, then I think I can point to the major kinds of competencies that need to be developed or strengthened.

Let me suggest that administration and leadership are antonyms, rather than synonyms. When you lead, you introduce a new structure or form into the activities of an organization or group. When you administer, however, you're carrying out, with minimum deviation, some already-established structures or forms that control the activities of organizations or groups.

Leadership , then, is actually antagonistic to administration since it replaces well-established procedures with new, untried, perhaps unknown, patterns of acting. Therefore, acts of leadership generate problems for administrators. For that reason, they're likely to be resisted by most smoothly-functioning administrative set-ups.

If you agree that there's conflict inherent in the differing natures of leading and administrating, you'll see one explanation as to why schools are often accused of resisting change and renewal. Try to introduce a major new curriculum. Try to move from one king of school organization to another. Try to adopt a new method for inservice staff development. Try to use a new kind of technology. Any of these acts will impose new, and possibly different, demands on school administrators.

You know, and I know, that if support is not available, a significant change in operating practices has little or no chance of succeeding in your schools. Also, you know that such changes reach into many areas that aren't related to the specific innovations. When you change or renew, you put extra burdens on the shoulders of administrators you're asking to support the innovations. It is very rational for an administrator to resist these extra burdens, since the change is likely to upset his finely-tuned organizational structure. If you look at the proposed innovation from that administrator's viewpoint, all you can see are problems and trouble.

Let's return to leadership now. It's the way an organization adjusts to its ever-changing external environment. I imagine many of you have read John Gardner's thoughts on the need for organizations to provide for renewal if they hope to continue to serve their clients and to maintain their status.

Yet when we look around us, we notice that schools in particular have continued to hold on to older, well-tested, but inappropriate structures. So much so that their clients are now shouting for radical changes. Schools must survive, but it's anyone's guess how quickly the needed changes can and will be made.

There's a real conflict between administration and leadership. I certainly hope none of you here today sees himself as strictly a school administrator. For if you do, I think you're in deep trouble.

There seems to me a way to resolve the conflict. Between and above leadership and and administration I place management. It involves blending leadership and ADMINISTRATION to accomplish organizational objectives and goals. A blend like that demands difficult decisions and actions by the manager. He must determine when, where, and how to maintain an existing structure or replace it with a new one. His decisions and actions must flow from the objectives of the organization. Sometimes he must resist the temptation to change; other times he must lead toward change. Sometimes present structures must be made stronger; other times they must be replaced if the organization is to succeed.

Now we've come to my major generalization. There just plain isn't enough management competency available in terms of the need for that ability.

The deficiency, in part, may lie in the fact that the average executive has been taught to feel and act as if his proper role is that of administrator. AASA should become AASM - the "M" standing for management, of course. School clients are pleading for management, including the right proportion of leadership. I don't think they want the personnel who operate their schools to continue to be preoccupied with bureaucratic administration.

Let's look at the competencies one needs if he's to function well as a manager, rather than administrator. Much more than administrator, a manager concerns himself with:

1. The forces or conditions outside the organization that affect its ability to reach its objectives.
2. Explaining and communicating goals and objectives to organization members and to outsiders.
3. Examining, reviewing, and comparing present practices and procedures in terms of available alternatives.
4. Allocating and conserving resources that never seem adequate to meet needs.
5. Planning - especially long-range planning.
6. Evaluating the results of operations in regard to the achievement of objectives.

Administrators do parts of these tasks, too, but in much lesser degree. And the manager is concerned with, though to a lesser degree, the major functions of the administrator. The administrator focuses on:

1. Carrying out established procedures.
2. Controlling activities of organization members.
3. Resolving conflicts.
4. Assuring compliance with rules and regulations.
5. Setting up schedules, deadlines, routines, etc.

As you well recognize, the differences are mainly ones of emphasis. You know better than I that the manager can't forget rules and regulations and that the administrator is often concerned about goals. But everyone's energy and time are limited, so the focus on managerial and administrative tasks tells you which is which.

Now, you may well be asking, how can school personnel acquire managerial competencies? There are beginning to be many options and opportunities available to anyone who wishes to improve his managerial competencies. In fact, the Council for Educational Development and Research in Washington, D.C., offers a catalog that cites a goodly number of options you may want to look at or try out in your schools. Your own organization's National Academy of School Executives is another major resource.

But for now I'll just describe one part of the work in progress at the Far West Laboratory that might contribute one set of useful solutions to problems we've been talking about here.

This program is called the Educational Management Program. Its staff recognized at the outset that the total problem faced by school managers is so immense that they could tackle only one part of it.

So they have narrowed their focus to developing and field-testing, for you-training resources to prepare school personnel to make more effective instructional decisions.

Our staff first looked at all the literature they could find on educational management and accountability. They decided that the minimum essentials of an accountability management system would include:

1. The system explicitly assigns responsibility for performance, for providing required information, and for accepting consequences.
2. The system is responsible for revealing what it does and how it does it —

to all interested parties, including parents and taxpayers.
3. The system provides for setting objectives, for selecting procedures, and for evaluation.
4. The system has a built-in mechanism to modify its operations and to monitor, control, and evaluate its own activities.

In short, instructional management, to take our example, must be carried out so that it is responsive in an accountability sense to the social system. There must be negotiation and communication among a variety of parties. The work must be understood, accepted, and supported by all key participants. Communication is needed to establish and maintain the system, to resolve problems and improve negotiations, and to provide information to everyone interested in the instructional process.

In order to provide useful information, of course, there are important technical procedures like measurement, and evaluation, which can't be overlooked. But we can't let them dominate the domain, or everything will become rigid and unworkable. When we think about management accountability, we must instead think first in terms of the broader image of education and of society. Then later we can think about specific plans, schedules, funding, staffing, training, and so on.

I don't want to take the time to review the research base that underlies the Laboratory's work in this area. Some years ago, with two distinguished colleagues, I was involved in studies of relationships between personal variables and administrative styles. Our major objective was to learn how one might describe the differences in the effectiveness of the performance of elementary principals.

We created a simulation that allowed different principals to meet the same problems in the same settings; we were able to observe them systematically so as to recognize their different performances. The simulated school was called Whitman School. It was based on a real school; many of its problems were drawn from that real school. Two hundred thirty-two principals served at Whitman School during weeks of assessment. They performed a variety of tasks. These included: preparing short articles for the school paper; resolving personal conflicts; making curriculum decisions; and handling a large variety of problems presented to them as in-basket items. So we required the principals to carry on their work in a standardized setting. We also collected information about them as people and about how they were regarded by their own superiors and by the teachers in their own schools.

What did we learn? When we looked for significant patterns in the responses of the principals to our simulation items, we extracted two general factors: "preparation for decision versus taking final action" and "amount of work done in handling items." We had anticipated the "amount of work" factor. Among our sample, the most industrious principals did four times as much work as the least industrious in the same amount of time. High work output seems to characterize better-prepared and more able principals. But large volumes of work did not necessarily indicate that the principal would be well-regarded by his superiors.

We found a more significant set of relationships when we looked at the preparation for decision factors. Principals who emphasized preparation for decisions in their work and who resisted the temptation to act hastily were also principals who earned high ratings from superiors in their home schools. They were better prepared professionally, as shown by tests of general and professional knowledge. They scored better on tests of reasoning, were above-average in fluency, and were able to master new materials quickly. Their values and interests tended to focus more strongly on the educational needs of pupils. They could better understand the complex nature of individual school problems. They more frequently recognize the need for further information before taking action.

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Our study also identified eitht additional style factors. They were: exchanging information, discussing before acting, com[illegible]ying with suggestions, analyzing the situation, maintaining organizational relatio[illegible]hips, organizing work, responding to outsiders, and directing the work of others. But, the major differences in performance among principals can be described basically in terms of the amount of work they accomplished and the emphasis they placed on making preparations for future decisions or on taking immediate action on their problems.

I hope that, without going back and reading that study, you'll agree with me that skill in preparing for decisions is a major area of competency for successful management. There are other studies that clearly show that "preparation" and "consultation" behaviors of school managers are vitally important in all aspects of planning. And more school personnel participate in curriculum planning than in any other decision-making area. That's why the Laboratory decided to focus on developing materials to provide the basic skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed by individuals and groups who are involved in preparing for instructional decisions.

Let's spend a few minutes looking at a filmstrip that describes some of our developed materials. (lights out - start projector, etc) (Insert A. attached hereto, will be used if filmstrip is not available)

I want to emphasize that the Determining Instructional Purposes training materials -- and the other packages that will be released later this year -- deal directly with real problems in instructional planning. Teachers, principals, curriculum specialists, and superintendents (wearing their instructional leadership hats) work together on common problems. In doing this jointly, they will find that the attitudes, motivation, and basic skills needed to function accountably will be developed and improved.

Remember that these are not quickie, one-shot courses, but rather a flexible, interwoven set of rigorously field-tested materials that can provide you with a full-scale in-service training program. Or you can encourage a nearby college or extension division to use them as resources for both preservice and inservice work.

I won't go into the content of these management training materials now, since I've brought along some folders that describe them reasonably well. The ones that are ready now deal with: setting goals, analyzing problems, and deriving objectives.

Three more units will be ready about December 1974: designing instructional programs, planning the implementation of programs, and orientation to program evaluation. Each of these six training units has gone through a full-scale development cycle that included field tests with many school managers in California and elsewhere. We don't simply slap together a package. We build it slowly. We carefully evaluate and revise as we go along.

Let me add one other comment. We have several of your AASA colleagues on our Board of Directors. If, at any time, you're reluctant to write or phone me directly about my remarks today -- or about ways you think we can work closely together in the future- I hope you'll feel free to communicate through them to us. Glenn Hoffman, Virgill Hollis, Dan Peterson, Hugh Livingston, Lorue Winget -- these and other active school administrators-help to make policy for the Laboratory. So when you read our Annual Report which will be ready in a few weeks, or try one of our products, and you want to give us feedback,we're eager to hear from you. I suppose where we have moved together can be summed up as a plea to AASA to become AASM. I hope my comments have given you some points to argue about or to question in the time that remains today.I hope you have found this a "time to get"rather than a "time to lose".I entitled by talk "A Time to Manage",but clearly now it is, for me, a "time to keep silent" and to give others a "time to speak."

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